

“We are going to take an exhaustive look at our education system. We will determine what is working, and what is not, and we will see clearly what it will take to make this state’s education system the best in the nation.”

The best way to secure a great future for Washington State is make sure we are providing our kids the best education we can deliver. That’s the goal of Washington Learns, my 18-month effort to make Washington’s education system a seamless approach to lifelong learning that starts before children begin kindergarten and continues through college. Six months into Washington Learns, this study already is producing results – my proposal to establish a Department of Early Learning to help our youngest kids be ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

Washington State has set quality graduation standards for its high school students and I stand by the requirement, starting with the Class of 2008, that they pass the 10th grade WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning). My supplemental budget provides additional help to high school students having difficulty passing this test because I believe that with the right assistance and learning tools, students who failed the test at first can meet the state’s standards for academic achievement and earn a high school diploma that really means something.

At the same time, my budget offers new programs that will help high school graduates move into promising careers and provides more access to four-year college degrees.

My Budget for Improving Education Is:

STRATEGIC

Puts early learning on par with K-12 and higher education, consolidating several child care and early learning programs into one agency with a focus on giving every pre-school child a better chance to learn when they start school.

RESPONSIBLE

Provides the right tools to help high school students meet state academic standards and graduate. Assistance is available to students struggling with the 10th grade WASL, which they must pass in order to graduate starting in 2008.

ACCOUNTABLE

Requires school districts to fully report on how they use new WASL-assistance funds, and the results achieved. In addition, new system monitors progress of students and effectiveness of education programs in public K-12 schools.

BY THE NUMBERS : Washington educates more than 1 million public school students in more than 2,200 individual schools.

Governor Gregoire's Supplemental Budget for Education

Puts focus on early learning

Creates Cabinet-level Department of Early Learning. Consolidates more than a half-dozen child care and early learning programs, and increases the state's commitment to a broadened and more serious system of early learning in the years before kindergarten. Agency improves parent and family supports, and early learning choices, for better learning outcomes. *\$1.5 million GF-State*

Creates system to rate quality of early learning opportunities. Department of Early Learning develops system to rate quality of early learning providers. Eventually, providers whose clients receive subsidized child care through the state receive higher reimbursement based on their quality ratings.

Establishes Early Learning Public-Private Partnership. Uses existing funds initially to develop coordinated public-outreach campaign to selected audiences about the importance of early learning for children and society. Partnership's first step seeks input from parents, community leaders and educators on what supports are needed. Establishes Early Learning Partnership Fund to support high quality learning services in Washington.

Helps students meet high standards

Helps struggling students pass the WASL. Provides funding to help students who have been unsuccessful in one or more 10th grade WASL tests in reading, writing and mathematics. School districts offer intensive instruction in ways that fit local needs including summer school, classes before or after school and on Saturdays, skill seminars, test preparation and tutoring. Activities occur on school campus, at other locations and times that meet student needs, or via the Internet. *\$38.5 million GF-State*

Requires school district accountability. Districts fully report how WASL-assistance funds are used, the types of assistance selected by students, the number of students who take part in each option and the results students achieved. Funds are set aside to reward districts with unique programs shown to help struggling students succeed.

Helps students for whom English is a second language. Provides funding for the state Superintendent of Public Instruction office to investigate how best to make sure language is not an obstacle to meeting standards in math. *\$100,000 GF-State*

Helps students furthest behind in math. New mathematics materials are incorporated in a course presented as a series of learning experiences. Students focus on one "bite" at a time, submitting math work samples or participating in mini-assessments. Student success with these options leads to meeting the math standard for high school graduation. New math tutorials are developed and offered on the Internet. *\$3.4 million GF-State*

Measures effectiveness of education services

Develops system to gather valuable data on student learning. Provides support to develop longitudinal student data system to provide student and program information used to measure effectiveness of education services. State Information Services Board oversees project to ensure the funding is well spent and project stays on track. *\$2.9 million GF-State*

Helps kids focus on their future	<p>Provides “Navigation 101” to help students. Adult guidance, mentoring and activities are used to help students plan for what they will do after high school. Program helps students set goals and take courses that reflect their skills and interests. <i>\$410,000 GF-State</i></p> <p>Gives pre-apprenticeship incentive grants to schools. Up to 10 school districts qualify for grants of \$10,000 each to support programs that guide interested students into the building trades and crafts. <i>\$100,000 GF-State</i></p>
Increases teacher salaries	<p>Increases teacher salaries. Funds an additional 1 percent pay increase for 84,000 public school teachers and staff. Brings total raise for the 2006-07 school year to 2.7 percent consistent with the latest Seattle area inflation forecast as required by voter-approved Initiative 732. <i>\$31.3 million GF-State</i></p>
Creates Washington Youth Academy	<p>Creates the Washington Youth Academy. Provides alternative high school for Washington teens who would benefit from a structured environment. The Youth Academy, patterned after highly successful programs in 25 states, provides a 22-week residency program environment for teens to earn high school credits, learn life skills, and eventually graduate from high school. Part of the funding comes from the Washington National Guard. <i>\$690,000 GF-State, \$3 million Capital, \$1.3 million federal funds</i></p>
Expands access to 4-year college degrees	<p>Increases opportunities to earn four-year college degrees. Creates bachelor-of-arts programs at four Washington technical and community colleges, including one offering a BA degree in applied technology. <i>\$1.7 million GF-State</i></p>